



*FIFTY-SIXTH
ANNUAL
REPORT*

OF THE

*Ministry-
At-Large*

IN

LOWELL, MASS,

FOR THE YEAR

From May, 1900, to

April, 1901, inclusive





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LOWELL, MASS.
COURIER-CITIZEN COMPANY, PRINTERS,
1901.

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* Deceased.

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TO THE CITIZENS OF LOWELL : —

In looking backward over fifteen years of work as Minister-at-Large in Lowell one naturally asks, What are the apparent results of it all in the community's life? Is the moral and social condition of any individual or family bettered because of the work attempted? I ask this question for my own encouragement to continue in the work, as well as for your information.

What has been the intention and purpose of the work? let me first ask.

Then, what has been the method?

Then, what are the apparent results of it all in the community's life?

AIM AND PURPOSE.

This Ministry-at-Large is to safeguard, by timely aid and friendly counsel, the family life of the small wage earner. The family being the social unit, we work in accordance with this idea.

Give material relief to families, when sickness or lack of work or misfortune causes destitution. Help support and guard the fatherless or motherless family, looking after its food, fuel, clothing, health, dwelling, education, companions, amusements, and moral habits.

Friendly counselling in the family life and its affairs is the most important part of the work to be done. It is in line with the advanced method which is now the practice of foremost philanthropic workers. It saves from moral and social wreckage men, women and children, and it keeps the family home up to better standards of living and good citizenship.

METHODS AND MEANS.

The endorsement of a family by its minister or priest, or by some reputable citizen, is sufficient guarantee to us till our own investigation is made. Pending this investigation temporary aid is given. As it is our purpose to aid industrious and orderly families, others are referred to the city or state institutions.

Our office, at 150 Middlesex Street, between Elliot and South Streets, is open regularly mornings of the week to receive applications from destitute or distressed families and to give advice and aid.

The mill corporations used to contribute to our work, because so many of their operatives receive our aid. But these contributions have not as yet been renewed.

The Ministry-at-Large carries on its threefold work of religion, education and charity to the small wage earners of Lowell by means of the legacies left to it by its friends and the annual contributions of those who believe in maintaining an institution which aids, without publicity, industrious and self-respecting people caught in the toils of non-employment, sickness or disaster, and with no other friend to aid them.

We aided this year without publicity, twenty-five hundred worthy persons. In furnishing them food, fuel, clothing, shoes, rent, medicines and nurses, we spent from the Thomas Nesmith Fund \$1,500, from the Jonathan Tyler Fund \$600, from the Dr. J. C. Dalton Fund \$84.00, from Mrs. John Nesmith's Maternity Fund \$25. In addition to this we have distributed contributions of clothing from the ladies of the Chelmsford Unitarian Church and from several Lowell families.

We gave free electric car excursions to three hundred women and children through the generosity of the Lowell & Suburban Railroad Co. The Country Week Committee have been allowed the use of our offices for its work.

Classes were held for the instructing of women and girls in cookery, dressmaking, millinery, hygiene, mother's duties a

amusements. Classes were held for men and boys in gymnastics, hygiene, debating and amusements. There was instruction also in readings, history, geography, politics, social problems.

Entertainments were given by members of these classes. There were Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter festivals for the children.

Evening and Textile School attendance and the using of the City Library are privileges constantly urged on the young men and women in our ministry.

Our Church is free to all. There is no creedal test, no pew rental, nor is there an enrolled membership. The church music was of fine quality, with Walter H. Mason as the organist. The congregational singing was led by Mrs. S. W. Killpartrick. The first part of the church service is musical and responsive. The rest of it is of the usual congregational order. The sermons are clear statements of the Christian principles and experiences that have given courage and leading and life to men needing it. The minister here must have a gospel to preach. The gospel of *salvation through service* gives him authority and gains him confidence. He must know *human nature*, know its types and its degrees of mind, know its social, its political, its religious mind and movements. Above all else, he must have in some measure a personality mastered, and communicable through being the bearer of faith and moral ideals.

Our Sunday School is free and orderly. Its discipline is firm but unobtrusive. The teaching force of the year has been Mrs. George C. Wright, Miss Mary Robinson, Mrs. Hardman, Miss Agnes Murphy, Miss Helen Mackiddie, Mrs. S. W. Killpartrick, Mr. William Hutton and myself.

RESULTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

In evidence as product and profit of this Ministry-at-Large is the Z family. We found the faithful mother and her five children forsaken, sick and destitute. The drunkard father a

yet foundation and summit of personal and social character ; they are the social primer of untrained people.

He learns that a man may be helped when he weakens or stumbles, but it is useless to try and carry him when he will not brace up and carry himself ; and

That the small wage earner is very much controlled by noxious newspapers, self-seeking men in politics and trades' unions, and his own prejudices and passions ; and

That the small wage earner is not hostile to churches and religion, but being untrained, *he does not perceive* what religion and churches mean for him—higher standards of thinking and living ; and

That churches should be more than ready to liquidate this moral and social obligation to their people, and to the community that exempts them from taxation, by inciting to these higher standards of thinking and living ; that the sensational church is hardly less harmful than the noxious newspaper or politician ; it is a hindrance and menace to those other churches that work with sound method and conscientious effort, and have the patience to accept the *natural* results, even if seemingly smaller, of such honest effort ; the sensational church sooner or later loses its fickle attendant, and the fickle attendant is without God or standard of living.

There is no place to-day for unlearned philanthropists or unlearned religionists, when men should be inspired to strenuous personal effort, to a heart unwearied by reverses or hardships, to the self-reliance, self-support, self-knowledge and self-control by which man and woman do their best work and rise above low standards and evil courses ;

There is no one class of society responsible for these low standards and evil courses that afflict us ; there is no single remedy for them, they inhere to human nature itself.

GEORGE C. WRIGHT,
Minister-at-Large.

LOWELL, APRIL 30, 1901.

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give, devise and bequeath unto the MINISTRY-AT-LARGE
in Lowell, Massachusetts, the sum of.....Dollars.

NOTE.—The list of Contributors to the Ministry-at-Large will be sent only to Contributors. It has been found that such lists published by charitable institutions may be the means of annoyance to those contributing.